

PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS IN FOSTER CARE

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

AT THE END OF THIS PRESENTATION THE PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

1. Examine the higher rate of psychotropic medications prescribed to children in foster care.
2. Understand child psychopharmacology.
3. Examine the importance of advocating for children in foster care who present with complex mental and physical challenges.

ISSUES RELATED TO DIAGNOSING AND TREATING CHILDREN

■ To Treat or Not to Treat

- Recent studies have shown that children in foster care are more likely to receive psychotropic medications when compared to children within the general population.
- Lack of coordination among treating providers, parents and social workers within the foster care system leads to confusion as to what psychotropic medications are supposed to accomplish.
- Children with behavior problems are more likely to be treated with psychotropic medication .
- Children in the foster care system are often referred because of abuse and neglect.
- Socio-economic status plays a role. i.e. Children on Medicaid are prone to receiving psychotropic medications
- Other factors

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS, ATTORNEYS AND OTHER ADVOCATES REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF CHILDREN SUFFERING FROM MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS.

- Ethical Considerations Regarding the Treatment of Children with Behavioral Disorders
- As advocates children need fair and adequate support and representation unable to make informed decisions regarding their health
- The advocate needs to examine his or her beliefs regarding treatment with medication.
- Learn how long the treatment with medications will be determined. And what is the expected outcome.
- What are the side effects associated with psychotropic medications?
- Children in the foster care system are often referred because of abuse and neglect.
- Socio-economic status plays a role. i.e. Children on Medicaid are prone to receiving psychotropic medications
- Other factors to consider such as genetic and environmental factors
- Learn about start guidelines and resources available regarding the safe use of medication. American Academy of Pediatrics, A medical guide for youth in foster care.
www.ocfs.state.ny.us/Main/Publications/Pub5116Single.PDF

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF CHILDREN WITH PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS

- Professional Experience and Observations Related to Personal Experience in the Treatment of Children within the foster care system.
- The use of psychotropic medications in children has not been well studied. Clinical trials typically do not include children.
- Controversy surrounds the diagnosing of children who are diagnosed with mood disorders such as Bipolar Disorder vs. ADHD.
- Most children are treated with stimulants and are more often diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder.
- Bipolar Disorder has recently been discussed in the child psychiatric field .Previous DSM editions suggested Bipolar Disorder does not occur until 18 years of age.
- ADHD and Bipolar Disorder symptoms overlap even though they originate from different parts of the brain.They are very different disorders that require different forms of treatment.
- Some experts suggest that both disorders exist simultaneously and different combinations of stimulants, antidepressants have been prescribed simultaneously.
- Family studies support that Bipolar Disorder and ADHD are genetically transmitted. Diagnosing should be the result of a thorough family medical and psychiatric history.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS